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## How to identify a Persian period text in the Pentateuch

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# On Dating Biblical Texts to the Persian Period

Discerning Criteria and Establishing Epochs

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# How to Identify a Persian Period Text in the Pentateuch

Konrad Schmid

The topic of this article pertains to the problems of dating biblical texts. As is well known, this area is contested and hotly debated in biblical studies, and it is very hard to rely on any kind of consensus.<sup>1</sup> For some scholars, the Pentateuch does not include any Persian period texts, but was already (basically) complete in the early 6th century.<sup>2</sup> For others, the Pentateuch is basically a product of the Persian or even Hellenistic period.<sup>3</sup> The very fact that such highly divergent positions are maintained by serious scholars shows that there is no way of *proving* a Persian date for specific Pentateuchal texts. All we can do is assess the likelihood of competing theories. However, the importance of this assessment should not be underestimated.

In 2013 and 2014, two conferences in Jerusalem regarding the composition and dating of the Pentateuch took place,<sup>4</sup> and it became abundantly clear that the divergences in global Pentateuchal scholarship are far greater than the convergences. Scholars employ different methodologies for approaching the history of the Pentateuch, but in order to make progress that has a chance of moving the field forward, one must go back to the basics.

Recently, Benjamin Sommer expressed a general reservation about the possibility of dating Pentateuchal texts by means of their ideological profile:

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g., O. H. STECK, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Guide to the Methodology* (2nd ed.; Atlanta: SBL, 1998), 143–150. Some more recent contributions to the discussion of linguistic dating include D.-H. KIM, *Early Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Linguistic Variability: A Sociolinguistic Evaluation of the Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (VTSup 156; Leiden: Brill, 2013); C. MILLER-NAUDÉ and Z. ZEVIT (eds.), *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (LSAWS 8; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012); A. HORNKOHL, “Biblical Hebrew: Periodization,” in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (ed. G. Khan; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1:315–325; R. REZETKO and I. YOUNG, *Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Steps Toward an Integrated Approach* (ANEM 9; Atlanta: SBL, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. e.g., I. KNOHL, *The Sanctuary of Silence* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995; repr. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007); J. STACKERT, *A Prophet Like Moses: Prophecy, Law, and Israelite Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 31–35.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the discussion e.g., in K. SCHMID, “Der Abschluss der Tora als exegetisches und historisches Problem,” in *Schriftgelehrte Traditionsliteratur: Fallstudien zur innerbiblischen Schriftauslegung im Alten Testament* (FAT 77; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 159–184; T. RÖMER, “Der Pentateuch,” in *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (ed. W. Dietrich et al.; ThW 1,1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014), 53–110.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. C. GERTZ et al. (eds.), *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures between Europe, Israel, and North America* (FAT 111; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016).

"In this article I make a very simple point concerning the dating of texts. It is odd that one needs to make this point; yet it does need to be made, because it pertains to a practice that is as common within biblical studies as it is specious. Scholars in our field frequently support a speculative dating of a text by asserting that, since the text's ideas match a particular time-period especially well, the text was most likely composed then. [...] According to this approach, a scholar ascertains the themes of a passage, then thinks about when that theme would be relevant, crucial, or meaningful to ancient Israelites, then dates the text to that time-period. It should be immediately clear that this method of dating holds no validity whatsoever."<sup>5</sup>

It is clear that this argument includes some rhetorical flourish: "no validity whatsoever" is quite harsh. While there are abuses of the argument Sommer describes, this does not in principle preclude the possibility of dating texts based on their congruency with developments in the intellectual history of ancient Israel, which nowadays are not only based on reconstructions from the Bible itself. Therefore, the situation is not as hopeless as Sommer suggests, and it is indeed possible, with due caution, to determine a few guidelines.

## I. The Pentateuch as a Pre-Hellenistic Text

To start with, there is some evidence to argue that the Pentateuch is basically a pre-Hellenistic text. For most scholars this is well accepted, but in the overall landscape of biblical studies, it is not.<sup>6</sup> The three most important arguments for establishing the Hellenistic period as a *terminus ante quem* for the Pentateuch are the following:

First, the Septuagint translation of the five books of the Pentateuch (done by at least five different translators) can be dated to the mid-3rd century B.C.E.,<sup>7</sup> a

<sup>5</sup> B. D. SOMMER, "Dating Pentateuchal Texts and the Perils of Pseudo-Historicism," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (ed. T. Dozeman et al.; FAT 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 85–108, 85.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e. g., N. P. LEMCHE, "The Old Testament – A Hellenistic Book?" *SJOT* 7 (1993), 163–193; repr. in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 317; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 287–318.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. e. g., F. SIEGERT, *Zwischen hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament: eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* (Münster: Lit, 2001), 42–43; M. GÖRG, "Die Septuaginta im Kontext spätägyptischer Kultur: Beispiele lokaler Inspiration bei der Übersetzungsarbeit am Pentateuch," in *Im Brennpunkt: die Septuaginta: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel* (ed. H.-J. Fabry and U. Offerhaus; BWA(N)T 153; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), 115–130; S. KREUZER, "Entstehung und Entwicklung der Septuaginta im Kontext alexandrinischer und frühjüdischer Kultur und Bildung," in *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament* (ed. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 3–39; S. KRAUTER, "Die Pentateuch-Septuaginta als Übersetzung in der Literaturgeschichte der Antike," in *Die Septuaginta und das frühe Christentum / The Septuagint and Christian Origins* (ed. T. S. Cauley and H. Lichtenberger; WUNT 277; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 26–46; F. ALBRECHT, "Die alexandrinische Bibelübersetzung: Einsichten zur Entstehungs-, Überliefe-

conclusion we reach in view of its Greek that resembles that of the Zenon papyri and in view of the links and commonalities especially with Demetrios.<sup>8</sup> There are some differences, especially in the second tabernacle account in Exod 35–40,<sup>9</sup> but the Septuagint basically attests the completed Pentateuch.

Second, the books of Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah allude and refer to the Torah of Yhwh or the Torah of Moses. Although it is not fully clear whether the textual body envisioned here is the Pentateuch as we know it, the references point in that direction.<sup>10</sup>

Third, unlike some texts in the prophetic corpus (e.g., Isa 34:2–4),<sup>11</sup> the Pentateuch does not imply the transience of heaven and earth. Heaven and earth are stable entities: in other words, the world will remain as it is forever. This major conceptual difference is best explained by assuming that the Pentateuch basically reflects the stable world order of the Persian period, whereas the prophets include historical experiences of the fall of that order and the political turmoil of the Hellenistic period.<sup>12</sup>

There are, however, a few exceptions regarding the pre-Hellenistic dating of the Pentateuch. The best candidate for a post-Persian, Hellenistic text in the Pentateuch seems to be the small “apocalypse” in Num 24:14–24, which in v. 24 mentions the victory of the ships of the כְּתִים over Ashur and Eber. This text seems to allude to the battles between Alexander and the Persians, as some scholars suggested.<sup>13</sup> Another set of post-Persian text elements might be the specific num-

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rungs- und Wirkungsgeschichte der Septuaginta,” in *Alexandria* (ed. T. Georges *et al.*; COMES 1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 209–243.

<sup>8</sup> The oldest manuscript of the Greek Pentateuch is Papyrus Rylands 458, dating to the mid-2nd century B.C.E., cf. J. W. WEVERS, “The Earliest Witness to the LXX Deuteronomy,” *CBQ* 39 (1977), 240–244; K. DE TROYER, “When Did the Pentateuch Come into Existence? An Uncomfortable Perspective,” in *Die Septuaginta: Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten: Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 20.–23. Juli 2006* (ed. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; WUNT 219; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 269–286, 277; G. DORIVAL, “Les origines de la Septante: la traduction en grec des cinq livres de la Torah,” in *La Bible grecque de Septante* (ed. M. Harl *et al.*; Paris: Cerf, 1988), 39–82.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. e.g., J. W. WEVERS, “The Building of the Tabernacle,” *JNSL* 19 (1993), 123–131.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. F. GARCÍA LÓPEZ, “תורה,” *TWAT* 8:597–637, here 627–630; G. STEINS, “Torabindung und Kanonabschluss: Zur Entstehung und kanonischen Funktion der Chronikbücher,” in *Die Tora als Kanon für Juden und Christen* (ed. E. Zenger; HBS 10; Freiburg: Herder, 1996), 213–256.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. O. H. STECK, *Bereitete Heimkehr: Jesaja 35 als redaktionelle Brücke zwischen dem Ersten und dem Zweiten Jesaja* (SBS 121; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985), 52–54; W. A. M. BEUKEN, *Jesaja 28–39* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2010), 300–327.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. O. H. STECK, *Der Abschluss der Prophetie im Alten Testament: ein Versuch zur Frage der Vorgeschichte des Kanons* (BThSt 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 80–83.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. H. ROUILLARD, *La péripécie de Balaam (Nombres 22–24)* (EBib N. S. 4; Paris: Gabalda, 1985), 467; F. CRÜSEMANN, *Die Tora* (Munich: Kaiser, 1992), 403; H.-C. SCHMITT, “Der heidnische Mantiker als eschatologischer Jahweprophet: Zum Verständnis Bileams in der Endgestalt von Num 22–24,” in “*Wer ist wie du, Herr, unter den Göttern?*”: Studien zur Theologie und Religionsgeschichte Israels: Festschrift Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag (ed. I. Kottsieper *et al.*; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 180–198, here 185.



bers in the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11.<sup>14</sup> These numbers build the overall chronology of the Pentateuch and differ significantly in the various versions. But these are just minor elements. The substance of the Pentateuch seems pre-Hellenistic. However, there is no comparable conclusive evidence that the Pentateuch is also basically pre-Persian. This is, however, contested by the linguistic approach to the Pentateuch.

## II. The Linguistic Approach to Dating the Pentateuch

In Sommer's above-mentioned article on the problems of dating Pentateuchal texts, he is unwilling to accept dating on the basis of ideological or theological profiles, but at the end of his article, he is very sympathetic with methods of linguistic dating. He sees this method as the most promising – or even the only possible – approach for dating biblical texts, so we should have a look at this approach first.

Since the seminal work of Wilhelm Gesenius,<sup>15</sup> the project of linguistic dating is based on differentiating between Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) on the one hand and Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) on the other. Classical Biblical Hebrew is usually seen as preexilic, Late Biblical Hebrew as postexilic.<sup>16</sup> However, the debate about the conclusiveness of historical-linguistic arguments is only beginning. This is not the place to deal with this issue in a satisfactory way, but I would like to mention my main reservations about a too narrowly handled linguistic evaluation of the Pentateuch, which often coalesces with an overall preexilic dating.<sup>17</sup>

First, the fact that a text is written in CBH and not in LBH informs us primarily about its *theological* perspective within the biblical tradition and not, or at

<sup>14</sup> Cf. J. HUGHES, *Secrets of the Times: Myth and History in Biblical Chronology* (JSOTSup 66; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990); see the reservations of R. HENDEL, "A Hasmonean Edition of MT Genesis? The Implications of the Editions of the Chronology in Genesis 5," *HeBAI* 1 (2012), 448–464, against a dating of the numbers in MT in the 2nd century B.C.E.

<sup>15</sup> W. GESENIUS, *Geschichte der hebräischen Sprache und Schrift* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1815); cf. S. SCHORCH and E.-J. WASCHKE (eds.), *Biblische Exegese und hebräische Lexikographie. das "Hebräisch-deutsche Handwörterbuch" von Wilhelm Gesenius als Spiegel und Quelle alttestamentlicher und hebräischer Forschung, 200 Jahre nach seiner ersten Auflage* (BZAW 427; Berlin / Boston: de Gruyter, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> See above n. 1.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g., G. A. RENDSBURG, "Pentateuch, Linguistic Layers in the," *EHLL* 2:60–63, here 63: "In sum, the main body of the Torah is written in Standard Biblical Hebrew, which represents the language of Judah during the monarchy (both early and late). A few chapters employ the technique known as style-switching, in order to create an Aramean environment. Some poems within the prose text reflect an older stratum of Hebrew and may hark back to a poetic epic tradition. And a few passages, especially those concerning the northern tribes, contain elements of Israelian Hebrew. Most importantly, there are no indications of Late Biblical Hebrew in the Pentateuch."

least not directly, about its *historical* date. To oversimplify my case for a moment: CBH texts are mainly Torah-oriented, whereas LBH texts are not, or not to the same extent.

Second, there is a significant gap in the external, non-biblical corpora for Hebrew from the 6th to 2nd centuries B.C.E.: There are many inscriptions from that period, but they are in Aramaic, not in Hebrew. Therefore, we are not able to define a clear *terminus ante quem* for CBH from the external evidence. This *terminus ante quem* could be in the 6th century, but it could also be later.

Third, there is a basic asymmetry between the methods used by linguists to date CBH texts on the one hand and LBH texts on the other. Biblical texts written in CBH belong, according to them, to the timeframe of the 8th to 6th century because the external evidence dates to that period. The external evidence for LBH is mainly found in the texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls from the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.E., but the biblical texts and books written in LBH, like Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel and Esther, are dated by linguists much earlier because they are, at least in part and for a variety of reasons, obviously older than the 2nd or 1st century. Therefore, the arguments regarding LBH show at minimum that a multitude of arguments need to be considered when dating biblical texts, and what seems fair for LBH should also be accepted for CBH.

Fourth, an important argument by those who favor a generally preexilic date for the Pentateuch is the absence of Persian loanwords. We are told that if the Pentateuch were to contain texts from the Persian period, then Persian loanwords would be expected in the texts. There are not any such loanwords. How significant is this?<sup>18</sup> Apparently, this argument is not very strong. To begin with, there are very few Persian loanwords in the Hebrew Bible as a whole.<sup>19</sup> Admittedly, no Persian loanword can be found in the Pentateuch, but why should we expect the case to be otherwise? It is necessary here to recall the specific narrative setting of the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch basically plays out in the 2nd millennium B.C.E., in the period before David, Solomon, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and, of course, the Persians. The fact that the Pentateuch itself is aware of this historized scenery is most clearly evident from the fact that the Pentateuch refrains from mentioning Jerusalem, especially in Gen 14 and 22,<sup>20</sup> and in Deuteronomy.

<sup>18</sup> M. ESKHULT, "The importance of loanwords for dating Biblical Hebrew texts," in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology* (ed. I. Young; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 8–23.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. e.g., אֲדָרְכִּין 'Daric' (Ezra 8:27; 1 Chr 29:7); אֲחֻשְׁרָפִים 'satraps' (e.g., Esth 8:9); גֹּבֵר 'treasurer' (Ezra 1:8); גִּנְזִים 'treasury' (e.g., Est 3:9); גִּנְזָה 'treasury' (1 Chr 28:11); דֶּת 'command, decree' (e.g., Esth 1:13); פְּתָגָם 'edict, sentence' (Qoh 8:11; Esth 1:20); פְּתָשָׁן 'copy' (e.g., Esth 3:14); cf. A. HURVITZ, "Biblical Hebrew, Late." *EHL* 1:329–338, here 331.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. K. BALTZER, "Jerusalem in den Erzväter-Geschichten der Genesis? Traditionsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu Gen 14 und 22," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte. Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Blum; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 3–12.

Therefore, Persian loanwords are not to be expected. The Pentateuch employs a language corresponding to its narrative setting.

A fifth argument by Hebraists for an early (i.e., preexilic) dating of CBH texts is the idea that it is impossible to reproduce real CBH in later times without slip-ups. The problem with this argument is a very fundamental methodological one: it is *a priori* and therefore not falsifiable. If a biblical text is written in clear and flawless CBH, then it is *by definition* preexilic because otherwise it would not be in correct CBH. In such an argument, the possibility of a *late* text in correct CBH is excluded as impossible *from the outset*. It therefore just begs the question, if CBH is determined as being copy-safe.<sup>21</sup> Of course, languages evolve over time, but in a learned elite idiom like CBH, a certain degree of inertness is likely.

Taken together, the validity of a linguistic approach to dating the Pentateuch should not be denied, but it is necessary to caution against using linguistic dating *alone* for dating issues. It should be employed in conjunction with other data and perspectives, such as theological profiles, intertextual links, as well as geographical and archaeological information.<sup>22</sup> The general problem in this discussion is that there is insufficient interaction between Hebraists and biblical scholars and that different, even conflicting, methods and results about how to date Pentateuchal texts end up somewhat insulated from each other.

### III. Observations from Historical Geography and the History of Religion

When accounting for some very basic observations about the geographical and religious shape of the Pentateuch, the odds of an overall preexilic date are slim. To be sure, for a variety of reasons the Pentateuch is likely to include a significant amount of literary material that goes back to the 9th through the 7th century B.C.E., especially in the realm of the patriarchal narratives.<sup>23</sup> In Gen 12–36, the texts seem to be multilayered, and even some of the later layers do not seem to

<sup>21</sup> Cf. in more detail E. BLUM, “The Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts – An Approach with Methodological Limitations,” in *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures Between Europe, Israel, and North America* (ed. J. C. Gertz et al.; FAT 111; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 303–326, here 312.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. STECK, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 143–150.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. e.g., E. BLUM, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 66–203; A. DE PURY, “The Jacob Story and the Beginning of the Formation of the Pentateuch,” in *Die Patriarchen und die Priesterschrift: Les Patriarches et le document sacerdotal. gesammelte Studien zu seinem 70. Geburtstag. Recueil d’articles, à l’occasion de son 70e anniversaire* (ATANT 99; Zürich: TVZ, 2010), 147–169; E. BLUM, “The Jacob Tradition,” in *The Book of Genesis. Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (ed. C. A. Evans; VTSup 152; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 181–211; A. DE PURY, “Die Erzelternerzählungen,” in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament. die Bücher der hebräischen Bibel und die alttestamentlichen Schriften der katholischen, protestantischen und orthodoxen Kirchen* (ed. T. Römer et al.; Zürich: TVZ, 2013), 196–216;

presuppose the Deuteronomic centralization of the cult – e.g., Jacob’s vow in Bethel to tithe the tenth to the sanctuary of Bethel in Gen 28:22.<sup>24</sup>

Some of the texts probably even emerge from a much older oral pre-history. But the overall organization and outlook of the Pentateuch seems to be a product of the exilic period at the earliest. Why? Let me first introduce a well-accepted methodological principle for a historical and critical approach to the Bible that was formulated some 100 years ago by Ernst Troeltsch, one of the champions of 19th and early 20th century historical scholarship.<sup>25</sup> Troeltsch claimed basically that three methodological steps are required for assessing biblical texts historically. In his language, the steps are “critique,” “analogy,” and “correlation.” And indeed, if we evaluate Pentateuchal texts critically, if we try to find analogies to them, and if we correlate these findings to each other, then I expect that we will reach some basic conclusions.

Just one example from historical geography and one from the history of religion must suffice for providing a general guideline. Both are very fundamental in nature and in European scholarship they are basically uncontested, but they seem to be unacceptable for scholars who stress the intellectual and historical singularity of the Pentateuch.

First, it is conspicuous in terms of geography that the Pentateuch’s storyline unfolds largely outside of Israel – a point that holds true not only for Exodus through Deuteronomy, but also for Gen 1–11 and parts of Gen 37–50. The fact that Gen 12–36 is an exception in this regard demonstrates again the specific nature of that narrative complex, which, as mentioned above, probably contains the earliest textual material in the Pentateuch.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, the traditional explanation of its mainly allochthonous character was that the Pentateuch, especially the Exodus story, reworks ancient memories of Israel’s journey out of Egypt.<sup>27</sup> This explanation is probably true to a certain extent, but the large amount of texts allotted to that period, especially all of the legal material, is very striking. The Pentateuch reports the legal basis of Israel being delivered at Mount Sinai, in the middle of nowhere between Egypt and Israel. Therefore, in agreement with David Clines, we can state that the Pentateuch is, in terms of the basic shape of its *content*, “an exilic work.”<sup>28</sup> This view can be cor-

I. FINKELSTEIN, *The Forgotten Kingdom. Archaeology and History of Northern Israel* (ANEM 5; Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 141–144.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. K. SCHMID, “Der Pentateuch und seine Theologiegeschichte,” *ZTK* 111 (2014), 239–271, 245–250.

<sup>25</sup> E. TROELTSCH, “Über historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie,” in *Zur religiösen Lage, Religionsphilosophie und Ethik: Gesammelte Schriften* (Vol. 2; Tübingen: Mohr, 1913), 728–753 (ET available at: <http://faculty.tcu.edu/grant/hhit/>).

<sup>26</sup> See n. 24.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. R. HENDEL, “The Exodus in Biblical Memory,” *JBL* 120 (2001), 601–622.

<sup>28</sup> D. J. A. CLINES, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (2nd ed.; JSOTSup 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 103–104.

roborated with respect to Mount Sinai, if we look for a moment at the traditions of a holy mountain in the preexilic portions of First Isaiah or the Psalms: Here, Mount Zion is Israel's holy mountain, not Mount Sinai. This is not to say that Mount Sinai is only an exilic invention intended to replace the destroyed Mount Zion, as e.g., Henrik Pfeiffer holds.<sup>29</sup> Maybe – even probably – there are older traditions about Mount Sinai in the Bible, but the extensive reworking of the Sinai tradition in the Pentateuch seems to be an exilic phenomenon at the earliest.

Second, there is a basic observation from the history of religion. The Pentateuch is a decidedly monotheistic text. It opens with an inclusive monotheistic text in Gen 1, and it argues broadly in an exclusive monotheistic fashion in the context of the Moses story.<sup>30</sup> There may be some older residues like Deut 32:8–9 (which I doubt),<sup>31</sup> but this fact does not affect the overall picture. If we look for analogies outside the Pentateuch, then the following points are important: First, there is no epigraphic evidence for a fully developed monotheism in Israel in the monarchic period (to the contrary, cf. Kunttillet 'Ajrud<sup>32</sup>). We see instead that Yhwh is the God of Israel and Judah as Chemosh is for Moab and as Qauš is for Edom. Secondly, the earliest attestations for a datable monotheistic position in the Bible can be found in Isa 45:1–7.<sup>33</sup>

Of course, biblical monotheism was not invented in the exilic period;<sup>34</sup> however, its developed outline in the Pentateuch seems to belong to this period rather

<sup>29</sup> H. PFEIFFER, *Jahwes Kommen vom Süden: Jdc 5; Hab 3; Dtn 33 und Ps 68 in ihrem literatur- und theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld* (FRLANT 211; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005); but cf. M. LEUENBERGER, "Jhwhs Herkunft aus dem Süden: Archäologische Befunde – biblische Überlieferungen – historische Korrelationen," ZAW 122 (2010), 1–19.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. K. SCHMID, "Differenzierungen und Konzeptualisierungen der Einheit Gottes in der Religions- und Literaturgeschichte Israels. Methodische, religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Aspekte zur neueren Diskussion um den sogenannten 'Monotheismus' im antiken Israel," in *Der eine Gott und die Götter: Polytheismus und Monotheismus im antiken Israel* (ed. M. Oeming and K. Schmid; ATANT 82; Zürich: TVZ, 2003), 11–38.

<sup>31</sup> K. SCHMID, "Gibt es 'Reste hebräischen Heidentums' im Alten Testament? Methodische Überlegungen anhand von Dtn 32,8f und Ps 82," in *Primäre und sekundäre Religion als Kategorie der Religionsgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (ed. A. Wagner; BZAW 364; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2006), 105–120.

<sup>32</sup> See Z. MESHEL, *Kunttillet 'Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. e.g., F. STOLZ, *Einführung in den biblischen Monotheismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996); M. WEIPPERT, "Synkretismus und Monotheismus: Religionsinterne Konfliktbewältigung im alten Israel," in *Jahwe und die anderen Götter: Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des antiken Israel in ihrem syrisch-palästinischen Kontext* (FAT 18; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 1–24; E. ZENGER, "Der Monotheismus Israels: Entstehung – Profil – Relevanz," in *Ist der Glaube Feind der Freiheit? die neue Debatte um den Monotheismus* (ed. T. Söding; QD 196; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003), 9–52; M. LEUENBERGER, "Ich bin Jhwh und keiner sonst." *Der exklusive Monotheismus des Kyros-Orakels Jes 45,1–7* (SBS 224; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. O. KEEL, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (2 vols.; OLB VI, 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

than to an earlier one, at least if we employ Troeltsch's methodology of critique, analogy, and correlation.

Another important point is that a more traditional and earlier dating of Pentateuchal texts also leads to a completely different reconstruction of Israel's intellectual history in the preexilic period. Israel then is not in continuity, but in discontinuity with all the neighboring temple cults, and the epigraphical evidence simply pertains to a deviant folk practice. Such a position relies on the Bible more than on a critical assessment of it. Of course, the Bible offers more than simply the historical and critical methodology put forth by Troeltsch, but a historical approach to the Pentateuch cannot do without Troeltsch.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV. The Date of the Priestly Code

The possible identification of Persian material in the Pentateuch depends above all on how one dates the so-called Priestly texts (in short: P). P is employed more and more as a historically fixed point in reconstructions of the Pentateuch's composition. Therefore, if texts are identified as post-P, and P is early Persian, then this post-P material belongs at the earliest to the Persian period as well.

Astonishingly, there is no fundamental dispute about P and the texts that should be assigned to it,<sup>36</sup> besides the open question of its alleged original end.<sup>37</sup> However, its date is unclear.

<sup>35</sup> See n. 25.

<sup>36</sup> See the standard text assignments by K. ELLIGER, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung," *ZTK* 49 (1952), 121–143; repr. in *Kleine Schriften zum Alten Testament* (ed. H. Gese and O. Kaiser; TB 32; Munich: Kaiser, 1966), 174–198; N. LOHFINK, "Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte," in *Congress Volume Göttingen 1977* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 29; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 183–225; repr. in *Studien zum Pentateuch* (SBAB 4; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), 213–253; E. OTTO, "Forschungen zur Priesterschrift," *TR* 62 (1997), 1–50. For a position against P as a source in Exodus see C. BERNER, *Die Exoduserzählung* (FAT 73; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); see, however, my review in *ZAW* 123 (2010), 292–294; R. ALBERTZ, *Exodus 1–18* (ZBK 2.1; Zürich: TVZ, 2012), 10–26. J. WÖHRLE, *Fremdlinge im eigenen Land: zur Entstehung und Intention der priesterlichen Passagen der Vätergeschichte* (FRLANT 246; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), holds a similar position for Gen 12–50.

<sup>37</sup> The debate regarding the original end of P arose especially in the wake of L. PERLITT, "Priesterschrift im Deuteronomium?" in *Deuteronomium-Studien* (FAT 8; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 123–143. Proposals include seeing the literary end at either Exod 29 (E. OTTO, "Forschungen zur Priesterschrift," *TR* 62 [1997], 1–50), Exod 40 (T. POLA, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift: Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von Pg* [WMANT 70; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 1995]; R. G. KRATZ, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments* [UTB 2157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000], 102–117; M. BAUKS, "La signification de l'espace et du temps dans l'historiographie sacerdotale," in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* [ed. T. Römer; BETL 147; Leuven: Peeters, 2000], 29–45), Lev 9 (E. ZENGER, "Priesterschrift," *TRE* 27:435–46; idem., *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* [5th ed.; Studienbücher Theologie 1,1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004], 156–75), Lev 16 (M. KÖCKERT, *Leben in Gottes Gegenwart: Studien zum Verständnis des Gesetzes im Alten Testament* [FAT 43;



Scholars who rely on linguistic arguments and who adhere to the classical paradigm of linguistic dating tend to date P in the preexilic period. Nevertheless, this conclusion is highly contested. Avi Hurvitz and Jacob Milgrom<sup>38</sup> are in favor of an early date on linguistic grounds, while Joseph Blenkinsopp and Baruch Levine,<sup>39</sup> for instance, evaluate the evidence differently.

It is not possible to solve this problem here, especially in light of more recent discussions of P that have made clear, on the one hand, that we probably need to distinguish between the legal and narrative portions when dating P-texts and, on the other hand, that dating P cannot just mean pinning down one single point in history for these texts. The P material seems to have grown over some time.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, I would like to present some observations for why, firstly, the main narrative of P is not likely to predate the early Persian period and, secondly, that texts dependent on these portions of P may therefore be confidently assigned to the Persian period as well.

### A. Linguistic Findings

The linguistic evidence for an early, i.e., preexilic date for P is anything but conclusive, as has been shown, first of all, by the general arguments mentioned above. In addition, there are some linguistic observations which – with all due caution – even *support* a Persian period setting.

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Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004], 105; C. NIHAN, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* [FAT 25; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], 20–68) or Num 27 (J.-L. SKA, “Le récit sacerdotal: Une ‘histoire sans fin’?” in *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* [ed. T. Römer; BETL 215; Leuven: Peeters, 2008], 631–653). A staggering number of endings within the Priestly document between Exod 40 and Lev 26 are suggested by J. C. GERTZ (ed.), *Grundinformation Altes Testament* (2nd ed.; UTB 2745; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 236; C. FREVEL, *Mit Blick auf das Land die Schöpfung erinnern* (HBS 23; Freiburg: Herder, 2000), supports the traditional conclusion in Deut 34 (cf. L. SCHMIDT, *Studien zur Priesterschrift* [BZAW 214; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1993], 271; P. WEIMAR, *Studien zur Priesterschrift* [FAT 56; Tübingen: Mohr, 2008], 17); J. BLENKINSOPP, “The Structure of P,” *CBQ* 38 (1976), 275–292; N. LOHFINK, “Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte,” (above, this note); P. GUILLAUME, *Land and Calendar: The Priestly Document from Genesis 1 to Joshua 18* (LHBOTS 391; London / New York: T & T Clark, 2009), see the conclusion of P<sup>8</sup> in Joshua.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. J. MILGROM, “The Antiquity of the Priestly Source: A Reply to Joseph Blenkinsopp,” *ZAW* 111 (1999), 10–22; A. HURVITZ, “Once Again: The Linguistic Profile of the Priestly Material in the Pentateuch and its Historical Age: A Response to J. Blenkinsopp,” *ZAW* 112 (2000), 180–191.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, “An Assessment of the Alleged Pre-Exilic Date of the Priestly Material in the Pentateuch,” *ZAW* 108 (1996), 495–518; B. A. LEVINE, *Numbers 1–20* (AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 1993).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. R. RENDTORFF, “Two Kinds of P? Some Reflections on the Occasion of the Publishing of Jacob Milgrom’s Commentary on Leviticus 1–16,” *JSOT* 60 (1993), 75–81; R. G. KRATZ, *Historisches und biblisches Israel: drei Überblicke zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 162–163.

P is basically written in what is identified as CBH, but there are some linguistic features that do not match the picture.<sup>41</sup> To name the two most obvious examples, for the 1st person singular pronoun, P usually employs אני instead of אנכי. This suggests that P is a transitional text between CBH and LBH. Another example is the word, רכוש “possession,” that is used by P, for instance, in Gen 12:5; 13:6, 46:6. It is otherwise only attested in Daniel, Ezra, Chronicles, the post-P parts of Numbers, and Gen 14 and 15. Another example of a LBH feature of the extended P material is the use of the word דגל, “banner,” in Num 1–10, which suggest a late date for these texts.

Given these elements, it is likely that P is to be situated toward the end of CBH, and given the lack of external corpora from the 6th and 5th centuries for CBH, a date in the neo-Babylonian or the Persian period is not excluded.

### *B. P and Ezekiel*

The frequent comparison of P-texts with Ezekiel does not compete with such a conclusion. Texts from the book of Ezekiel do not center around a fixed point in the history of ancient Israel. They do not belong *per se* to the time of the historical prophet Ezekiel, as e. g., Moshe Greenberg held.<sup>42</sup> On the contrary, the book of Ezekiel is a very complex literary entity that grew into its present form over some time.

The observable links between P and Ezekiel even hint that P was often on the receiving end of the literary connection. A very good example, to my mind, is the reception of Ezek 7 (in combination with Amos 8) in Gen 6:13, an undisputed P text. God’s statement here that “the end has come” is very close to Ezek 7:2–3 and seems to allude to it, in order to demonstrate: Yes, there was an end of the world decreed by God, but this crisis has been resolved. It happened a very long time ago and has been settled by God once and for all. In order to interact subversively with the biblical prophecy of doom, P transformed Ezek 7 from a divine statement about the present into a primeval action, as Thomas Pola has pointed out again recently.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Cf. the discussions in n. 38 and 39.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. M. GREENBERG, *Ezekiel 1–20* (AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1983); *Ezekiel 21–37* (AB 22B; New York: Doubleday, 1995); German translation 2001, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> T. POLA, “Back to the Future: The Twofold Priestly Concept of History,” in *Torah and the Book of Numbers* (ed. C. Frevel et al.; FAT 62; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 39–65; see also R. SMEND, “‘Das Ende ist gekommen’: Ein Amoswort in der Priesterschrift,” in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. J. Jeremias and L. Perlt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 67–74; repr. as *Die Mitte des Alten Testaments: Exegetische Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 238–243; J. GERTZ, “Noah und die Propheten: Rezeption und Reformulierung eines altorientalischen Mythos,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 81 (2007), 503–522.



### C. Cultural and Political Realities Reflected in P

Finally, there are some specific cultural and political realities reflected in P that corroborate an early Persian setting. The first element is the term מְכַנְסִים “trousers” mentioned in Exod 28:42; 39:28; Lev 6:3; 16:4 and Ezek 44:18. Relying especially on Peter Calmeyer,<sup>44</sup> David Sperling has pointed out that “trousers” seem to be a Persian innovation in the ancient Near East.<sup>45</sup>

This point about “trousers” may seem rather trivial, but it is nevertheless noteworthy. Probably more conclusive is the evidence concerning P’s political geography. In Gen 10, a very general element is the pluralistic conception of the world as portrayed in the table of nations, which corresponds neither to Neo-Assyrian nor to Neo-Babylonian, but rather to Persian imperial policy.<sup>46</sup>

Another observation is the status of Egypt in P. P has a very inclusive and pacifistic world view, with one single exception: Egypt. The Egyptian army is especially the target of God’s violence in Exod 14, where the army is drowned in the sea – a striking and exceptional element in P’s narrative. According to Gen 9, God renounces violence and there is no other instance in P akin to Exod 14, where God is portrayed as destructive. Why is this so? The victory over Egypt’s army in Exod 14 is portrayed as God’s means of establishing his כְּבוֹד “glory,” which later plays an important role in P but does not occur prior to Exod 14.<sup>47</sup> Apparently, only after Egypt is defeated is God’s glory ultimately established and present in the world. Albert de Pury has suggested that this specific stance toward Egypt might reflect P’s historical position in the early Persian period, *prior to the Persian conquest* of Egypt in 525 B.C.E. by Cambyses.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> P. CALMEYER, “Hose,” *RIA* 4:472: “Fast bis zum Ende der altorientalischen Kultur ist die Hose ganz unbekannt geblieben; sie taucht erst in deren letzter Periode, der achaemenidischen, plötzlich und in vielerlei Varianten auf, und zwar ausschliesslich bei Völkern der nordwestlichen, nördlichen und nordöstlichen Randgebiete, die zum Teil erst jetzt in die Sphäre dieser Kultur geraten waren.”

<sup>45</sup> See D. SPERLING, “Pants, Persians and the Priestly Source,” in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine* (ed. R. Chazan et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 373–385.

<sup>46</sup> J. G. VINK, “The Date and the Origin of the Priestly Code in the Old Testament,” in *The Priestly Code and Seven Other Studies* (ed. J. G. Vink et al.; OTS 52; Leiden: Brill, 1969), 1–144, here 61; A. DE PURY, “Sem, Cham et Japhet: De la fraternité à l’esclavage?” in *κορυφαίω ἀνδρί: Mélanges offerts à André Hurst* (ed. A. Kolde et al.; Geneva: Droz, 2005), 495–508; E. A. KNAUF, “Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichten der Deuteronomisten,” in *Tue Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; BETL 147; Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 104–105; NIHAN, *From Priestly Torah*, 383.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. T. WAGNER, *Gottes Herrlichkeit. Bedeutung und Verwendung des Begriffs kābōd im Alten Testament* (VTSup 151; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012).

<sup>48</sup> A. DE PURY, “P<sup>8</sup> as the Absolute Beginning,” in *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l’Hexateuque et de l’Ennéateuque* (T. Römer and K. Schmid; BETL 203; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 99–128; repr. in *Die Patriarchen und die Priesterschrift: Les Patriarches et le document sacerdotal: Gesammelte Studien zu seinem 70. Geburtstag: Recueil d’articles, à l’occasion de son 70e anniversaire* (ATANT 99; Zürich: TVZ, 2010), 13–42.

Finally, a more concrete aspect in that respect is that in P, the miracle at the sea plays out “in front of Ba’al Zaphon” (Exod 14:2). This denotes the sanctuary of Zeus Casios that is mentioned by Herodotus (II, 6, 158; III, 5). It is usually identified with *Ras Qasrun* on the sandbar of the *Sabakhet* (*Sabkhat*) *el Bardawil*. As early as 1990, G.I. Davies noted that there are no relevant pre-Persian remnants at *Ras Qasrun*, an observation that supports a Persian setting for P’s exodus account.<sup>49</sup>

## V. The Date of the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26)

The so-called Holiness Code (H) is also written in CBH and, for this reason, some scholars attribute it to the monarchic period.<sup>50</sup> For a variety of reasons, this conclusion is not tenable, but will remain contested. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish a *relative* date with regard to P. H presupposes and re-conceptualizes the theology of P.

The best case for this has been made by Norbert Lohfink.<sup>51</sup>

*Gen 17:6–7*

I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. **I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you** throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you and to your offspring after you.**

*Lev 26:3, 9–13*

If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, (9) I will look with favor upon you and make you fruitful and multiply you; **and I will maintain my covenant with you.** [...] *I will place my dwelling in your midst*, and I shall not abhor you. And *I will walk among you, and will be your God*, and you shall be my people. I am Yhwh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be their slaves no more; I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

*Exod 6:4–7*

**I also established my covenant with them**

[...] I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery

<sup>49</sup> G.I. DAVIES, “The Wilderness Itineraries and Recent Archaeological Research,” in *Studies in the Pentateuch* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 41; Leiden: Brill 1990), 161–175; cf. for the evidence M. DOTHAN, “Archaeological Survey of Mt. Casius and its Vicinity,” *ErIsr* 9 (1969), 47–60 (Heb.).

<sup>50</sup> KNOHL, *The Sanctuary of Silence*, 199–230.

<sup>51</sup> N. LOHFINK, “Die Abänderung der Theologie des priesterlichen Geschichtswerks im Segen des Heiligkeitgesetzes. Zu Lev. 26,9.11–13,” in *Wort und Geschichte: Festschrift für Karl Elliger zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Hartmut Gese and Hans Peter Rüger; AOAT 18; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 129–136; repr. in *Studien zum Pentateuch* (SBAB 4; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), 157–168.

to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. **I will take you as my people, and I will be your God.** You shall know that I am Yhwh your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians.

*Exod 29:45–46*

*I will dwell among the Israelites, and I will be their God.* And they shall know that I am Yhwh their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt *that I might dwell among them*; I am Yhwh their God.

It is quite evident that Lev 26 takes up important concepts and wording from central – and antecedent – P texts, especially Gen 17 and Exod 6. Whereas the promises in P are unconditional, H introduces them with the protasis “If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully” (Lev 26:3), which is tantamount to “Deuteronomizing” the Priestly theology. H seems to presuppose both P and D and combines their ideologies.

This post-P setting for H enjoys consensus among those who allow for a P-H-distinction.<sup>52</sup> But if one dates P to the monarchic period, then it would be possible to do the same for H. However, as mentioned before, a preexilic date for P, especially its narrative framework, is difficult to maintain, meaning that a Persian period setting is just as likely for H as it is for P.

At this point, a forgotten pioneer of post-P additions in the Pentateuch should be mentioned. In his 1862 book on Exod 35–40, Julius Popper identified several late additions to the construction report of the tent of meeting. His method relied especially on comparing the different textual witnesses, such as the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch, with the Masoretic text.<sup>53</sup>

## VI. The Case of Genesis 24

One of the clearest cases of a Persian period text in the Pentateuch is Gen 24 that can be discussed here only very briefly. It is a text that is difficult to link with a broader stratum or layer detectable elsewhere. In several publications, Alexander Rofé has made a case for this date, and a detailed analysis of the text can be found in his contributions.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> E. BLUM, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter 1990), 318–332, sees the material usually assigned to H as an integral part of P.

<sup>53</sup> J. POPPER, *Der biblische Bericht über die Stifftshütte: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Composition und Diaskeue des Pentateuch* (Leipzig: Hunger, 1862).

<sup>54</sup> The most comprehensive of his arguments can be found in A. ROFÉ, “An Enquiry into the

The main arguments are the following: First, Gen 24:3, 7 employ the title *אלהים השמים* for God (cf. LXX, which aligns 24:7 with 24:3). In the Hebrew Bible, this formula can be found elsewhere only in Jonah 1:9; Ezra 1:2; Neh 1:4–5; 2:4, 20; 2 Chr 36:23, all these texts probably belong to the Persian period. In Aramaic, the title *שמיא אלה* is employed in Dan 2:18, 19, 37, 44; Ezra 5:(11), 12; 6:9–10; 7:12, 21, 23. It is also attested at Elephantine: AP 27:15; 30:28; 30:2, (15), 28; 31:(2,) 27; 32:4; 38:(2,) 3, 5; 40:1. Apparently, the title “God of Heaven” reflects Persian period language and seems to be an interculturally used denominator for God stemming from that time.<sup>55</sup>

Secondly, there are quite a few LBH features in Gen 24 that point to a Persian period setting. The most obvious case might be the imperative *הגמליני* “let me sip” in Gen 24:17, which is a *hapax* in Biblical Hebrew but is common in Rabbinic Hebrew.<sup>56</sup> Further examples can be found in Rofé’s article.

And thirdly, the issue of avoiding mixed marriages is absent from alleged preexilic material, but it is broadly attested and debated in Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>57</sup> Taken together, it is more plausible to date Gen 24 in the Persian period than to any other time.<sup>58</sup>

## VII. Numbers and Chronicles

Some recent redaction-critical theories on the book of Numbers have argued that there are no pre-P elements in the book. Following this approach (which is not generally accepted), the book of Numbers *in toto* would qualify as a Persian period portion of the Pentateuch.<sup>59</sup> Be that as it may, there are some close and

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Betrothal of Rebekah,” in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Blum et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 27–39. Cf. also Blum, *Vätergeschichte*, 383–387.

<sup>55</sup> S. BEYERLE, “The ‘God of Heaven’ in Persian and Hellenistic Times,” in *Other Worlds and Their Relation to This World: Early Jewish and Ancient Christian Traditions* (ed. T. Nicklas et al.; JSJSup 143; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 17–36.

<sup>56</sup> Rofé, “An Enquiry,” 29.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. R. ROTHENBUSCH, “The Question of Mixed Marriages between the Poles of Diaspora and Homeland: Observations in Ezra-Nehemiah,” in *Mixed Marriages: Inter-marriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period* (ed. C. Frevel; LHBOTS 547; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 60–77; U. FISTILL, *Israel und das Ostjordanland: Untersuchungen zur Komposition von Num 21,21–36,13 im Hinblick auf die Entstehung des Buches Numeri* (ÖBS 30; Berlin: Lang, 2007), 213.

<sup>58</sup> G. A. RENDSBURG, “Some False Leads in the Identification of Late Biblical Hebrew Texts: The Cases of Genesis 24 and 1 Samuel 2:27–36,” *JBL* 121 (2002), 23–46, still argues otherwise.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. R. ACHENBACH, *Die Vollendung der Tora: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch* (BZABR 3; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 629–633; T. RÖMER, “Das Buch Numeri und das Ende des Jahwisten: Anfragen zur ‘Quellenscheidung’ im vierten Buch des Pentateuch,” in *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (ed. J. C. Gertz et al.; BZAW 315; Berlin/New York: de

conspicuous parallels that Hans-Peter Mathys has described between Numbers and Chronicles that are relevant to our question in any case.<sup>60</sup> These parallels pertain to the role of the Levites, the highlighted significance of Pesach, the stressing of the tenth, the regulations about temple funds and the numbering of the people, the absence of the notion of collective guilt, the concept of holy war, and others. For a detailed discussion, the reader may be referred to Mathys' article. Of course, none of these elements alone can bear the weight of proving a late date for Numbers as a whole, but the cumulative evidence of these issues hints at the plausibility of a common intellectual milieu behind Numbers and Chronicles, even if the book of Numbers may include earlier traditions.<sup>61</sup>

### VIII. Identifying Criteria for Dating Pentateuchal Texts to the Persian Period

For European scholarship, it is often stating the obvious to say that the Pentateuch includes material from the Persian period.<sup>62</sup> The Pentateuch indeed seems to reflect the Persian Empire as the historical background in which its authors and compilers operated. Of course, the Pentateuch contains many texts that are older, dating back to the monarchic period (e.g., in the Jacob cycle; also in the exodus story), and if one accounts for oral pre-stages and traditions, then one can think of even earlier dates.<sup>63</sup> But because this position is contested, the clarification of its methodological grounds is necessary. The following points need to be highlighted in this respect.

#### A. Linguistics

I maintain that, on its own, the fact that the Pentateuch was written in CBH does not place its literary formation in the preexilic period. On the one hand, there is no compelling reason to exclude the possibility of CBH texts in the later 6th and even the 5th or 4th century B.C.E. On the other hand, we have some texts like Gen

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Gruyter, 2002), 215–231; see also KRATZ, *Komposition*, 115–117, and the overview in C. FREVEL, “The Book of Numbers: Formation, Composition, and Interpretation of a Late Part of the Torah. Some Introductory Remarks,” in *Torah and the Book of Numbers* (ed. C. Frevel et al.; FAT 62; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 1–37.

<sup>60</sup> H.-P. MATHYS, “Numeri und Chronik: Nahe Verwandte,” in *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* (ed. T. Römer; BETL 215; Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 555–578.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. e.g., Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, 208–218.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. e.g., E. S. GERSTENBERGER, *Israel in the Persian Period: The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B. C. E.* (BibEnc 8; Atlanta: SBL, 2011); T. RÖMER, “Zwischen Urkunden, Fragmenten und Ergänzungen. Zum Stand der Pentateuchforschung,” ZAW 125 (2013), 2–24; idem. (ed.), *Einleitung in das Alte Testament: die Bücher der Hebräischen Bibel und die alttestamentlichen Schriften der katholischen, protestantischen und orthodoxen Kirchen* (Zürich: TVZ, 2013), 120–168.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. SCHMID, “Der Pentateuch und seine Theologiegeschichte.”

24 that exhibit some features of LBH. P also seems to border on LBH. Methods of linguistic dating are relevant for a historical approach to the Pentateuch, but such methods need to be balanced by the incorporation of other methods.<sup>64</sup>

### *B. Historical, Cultural, and Political Analogies and Intellectual Developments*

This issue is tricky and contested,<sup>65</sup> and it requires us to accept the basic tenets of Troeltsch's historical method. If one embraces his three steps of "critique," "analogy," and "correlation,"<sup>66</sup> then the "exilic" shape of the Pentateuch (which takes place mostly outside of Israel), its "republican"<sup>67</sup> rather than monarchic outlook, its inclusive, pluralistic, and peaceful stance towards other nations, even the reference to "trousers" – when viewed altogether – indeed point to a post-monarchic and specifically to a Persian Period setting for some of its text portions, especially P.

The same is true for a comparison of Pentateuchal texts with concepts and developments outside of Genesis–Deuteronomy. If one relies even modestly on comparable biblical and epigraphical material outside of the Pentateuch, then the Pentateuch's monotheism,<sup>68</sup> as well as the connections between Numbers and Chronicles or between Gen 24 and Ezra–Nehemiah suggest a Persian-Period dating.<sup>69</sup>

To sum up: If we follow the road taken by critical scholarship over the past 250 years and read the Bible like any other book,<sup>70</sup> we should employ *all* the methods at our disposal to determine the historical origin and context behind

<sup>64</sup> See n. 21.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. K. SCHMID, "Anfänge politikförmiger Religion: Die Theologisierung politisch-imperialer Begriffe in der Religionsgeschichte des antiken Israel als Grundlage autoritärer und toleranter Strukturmomente monotheistischer Religionen," in *Religion – Wirtschaft – Politik: Forschungszugänge zu einem aktuellen transdisziplinären Feld* (ed. A. Liedhegener; Zürich: TVZ/Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011), 161–177.

<sup>66</sup> See n. 25.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. T. RÖMER, "La loi du roi en Deutéronome 17 et ses fonctions," in *Loi et Justice dans la Littérature du Proche-Orient ancien* (ed. O. Artus; BZABR 20; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 99–111.

<sup>68</sup> See n. 33.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. K. SCHMID, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 141–181. Cf. also the interpretation of Gen 22 by T. VEIJOLA, "Das Opfer des Abraham – Paradigma des Glaubens aus dem nachexilischen Zeitalter," in *Offenbarung und Anfechtung: Hermeneutisch-theologische Studien zum Alten Testament* (ed. W. Dietrich and M. Marttila; BThSt 89; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007), 88–133; see also K. SCHMID, "Die Rückgabe der Verheißungsgabe: Der 'heilsgeschichtliche' Sinn von Genesis 22 im Horizont innerbiblischer Exegese," in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag, vol. 1* (ed. M. Witte; BZAW 345; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2004), 271–300.

<sup>70</sup> J. W. ROGERSON, "Die Bibel lesen wie jedes andere Buch? Auseinandersetzungen um die Autorität der Bibel vom 18. Jahrhundert an bis heute," in *Biblicher Text und theologische Theoriebildung* (ed. S. Chapman et al.; BThSt 44; Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 2001), 211–234.

Pentateuchal texts. And if we do so, we will see that despite the fact that the world of the Pentateuchal narrative plays out in the 2nd millennium B.C.E., there is evidence that the world of some of its narrators belongs to the post 539 B.C.E. era, the Persian period.